LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Left Unity

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MAY DAY CHALLENGE

The Editor

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Ken Gill

TORIES AND THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Alan Fisher

Turning Point in India–S. G. Sardesai

Bill of Intolerance–Vishnu Sharma

MAY 1971

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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CONTENTS

		Page
Notes of the Month: May Day Challenge. *Message of May Day—Lessons of the Twenty-Fourth Congress—A Policy for Peace—Capitalism in Crisis—Bogus Fight Against Inflation—Japanese 'Economic Miracle'—The Parable of Steel—The Reverse Side of the 'Miracle'—President Nixon's Dilemma—Bourbons of Washington—Call of May Day to the British People—Testing Time for Action*	**R.P.D.**	193
Forty Years Ago		202
Where Do We Go From Here? Role of trade union action committees	**Ken Gill**	204
Emergency Donations Appeal	**Editorial Board**	207
Crisis of Nationalised Industries: Tories and the Public Employees	**Alan Fisher**	208
Turning Point in India. The parliamentary election	**S. G. Sardesai**	212
Lyrics in Honour of Alan Bush	**Nancy Bush**	216
The Bill of Intolerance. Call to trade union movement to combat racialist immigration measures	**Vishnu Sharma**	218
Common Market and Sovereignty	**Gordon Schaffer**	220
Fifty Fighting Years (4): The Era of Majority Labour Governments 1945-1971	**Andrew Rothstein**	224
Book Reviews: 'Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary', Giuseppe Fiore: *Paolo Spriano*; 'One Man in His Time', Alick West: *Edgell Rickward*; 'Labour Radical', Len De Caux: *John Williamson*; 'British Foreign Policy During World War II', V. Trukhanovsky: *Andrew Rothstein*; 'The World of the Ranters', A. L. Morton: *R. Cohen*; 'English Party Politics, Vol. I 1660-1906, Vol. II 1906-1970', edited by Alan Beattie: *James Harvey*		233
Positive Action	**Nicola Seyd**	240
Publications Received		Inside back cover

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Notes of the Month

MAY DAY CHALLENGE

> **'I consider this the grandest and most important part of the whole May Day festival, that on May 4, 1890, the *English proletariat* . . . *again entered the movement of its class* . . . On May 4, 1890, the English working class joined up in the great international army . . . the grandchildren of the old Chartists are entering the line of battle.'**
>
> ENGELS, *The Fourth of May in London*, Vienna *Arbeiterzeitung*, May 23, 1890.

April 19, 1971

Eighty-one years have passed since May Day proclaimed the international challenge of the working class to the old society of exploitation. Today the challenge calls anew at a higher stage than ever in the battle. On that first May Day the proclamation of the aim, alongside the immediate struggle for the eight-hour day, to overthrow the old class society and win socialism was still an aspiration of the future. Today socialism extends over one-third of the world; the advance of national liberation has undermined the old basis of imperialism; in all the countries of capitalism the peoples are striving towards aims of socialism along a variety of paths, even though sometimes beset with confusion. But the battle is not over. Reaction still delivers its blows to turn back the advance of the peoples: witness Vietnam, Pakistan, Greece, or in Britain the Trade Union Bill and the budget offensive. May Day renews the call for the strength and unity of the working people to defeat the offensive and war policies of reaction, and win the victory for a new advance towards the aims of socialism and peace.

Message of May Day

The call of May Day has always from the outset embodied two principles which are more than ever imperative in tackling our problems today. The first is to combine the immediate struggle of the working class, at that time expressed in the fight for the eight-hour day, with the long-term aim of basic social change to end class society. In the words of the decision of the Zürich Congress of the old Socialist International in 1893:

> The demonstration of May First for the eight-hour day must serve at the same time as a demonstration of the determined will of the working class

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to destroy class distinctions through social change and thus enter on the road, the only road, leading to peace for all peoples, to international peace.

The second principle, bound up with the first, and at the very heart of the message of May Day is the principle of internationalism—what Engels described on that first May Day of 1890 (in his Preface to the fourth German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*) as the demonstration of the working class of the capitalist countries 'mobilised for the first time as One army, marching forward under One flag, and fighting for One immediate aim.' Have these basic principles of Marxism, enshrined in the tradition of May Day, become outdated by the changes in modern conditions? On the contrary, it is precisely the modern conditions which are demonstrating them with a hundred times increased force. It is manifest that the present battle of the working class in Britain against the Trade Union Bill is not only an industrial battle, but simultaneously industrial and political. Indeed, the alarm of the ruling class is precisely over this new situation that the industrially organised working class is directly conducting a political struggle, even though there is still the difference in tactics between the majority seeking to confine the action to non-co-operation as a challenge to the proposed law, and those, already representing four millions at the Special TUC, who recognise the necessity of the full use of industrial strength to defeat it. But the same Heath Government which attacks the workers in Britain supplies arms for South African racialism, gives support to the American aggression in Vietnam and introduces the most extreme racialist legislation with the present Immigration Bill. The battle is manifestly international. In the era of the multi-national companies internationalism is more than ever indispensable. In so far as divisions and differences weaken the common front, it is more than ever the concern of every socialist and working class fighter to strive to overcome such divergences and find the basis for common action, to work for unity in the battle equally at home and in the international field.

Lessons of the Twenty-Fourth Congress

In this situation the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during March and April has taken on special significance for the peoples of all countries. The many delegations from countries all over the world, representing over one hundred communist, national-democratic and left-socialist parties from ninety countries, are now engaged in bringing the message of this Congress to their countries. Among the many

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highlights of the Congress, three may be singled out. First, the contrast between socialism and capitalism is now more conspicuous than ever before. On the one hand, the new triumphs of socialism, demonstrated in the achievements of the Eighth Five Year Plan and prepared in the Ninth Five Year Plan, revealing an economy without inflation or unemployment or recessions, and achieving continuous advance in construction and in well-being of the people. On the other hand, the storms and instability, chronic inflation, mass unemployment and class conflicts racking the economy and social conditions of the capitalist countries. No worker in the Western capitalist countries could miss the contrast, if he is allowed to know it, that the offensive now being conducted against his standards and to cut the social services should coincide with the new advances in the land of socialism. At the very moment when the tragedy of the homeless in Britain has reached crisis proportions, and a new offensive is launched to cut down the house building programme and increase still further the already high rents which eat up so large a proportion of a worker's income, the Soviet Union is able to announce the re-housing of fifty-five million people, or nearly a quarter of the population, during the last five years, together with the plan in hand to re-house sixty million more by 1975, while rents, which include heating, hot water, and lighting, are controlled at between four and five per cent of the family income, and the tenants pay no rates. These are the social realities which make the steady advance in real wages only a partial measure of the full contrast. At the very moment when the offensive is delivered to mutilate the provisions of the health service by increased prescription and dental charges and restriction of sickness benefits, socialism, which was the pioneer to introduce a free health service, is able to announce still further extension of that service, with the training of 151,000 new doctors during the past five years. This contrast between two worlds, the world of capitalism and of socialism, is the first great lesson of the Twenty Fourth Congress.

A Policy for Peace

The second great lesson of the Congress is the constructive policy for peace, not as a pious aspiration, but defining a concrete six-point plan: (1) the elimination of the hotbeds of war in South East Asia and the Middle East through political settlements on the basis of respect for the legitimate rights of states and peoples subject to aggression; (2) the promotion of peace in Europe through a European Security Conference and parallel annulment of the

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Warsaw Pact and Nato; (3) a ban on nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, and a Conference of the five nuclear powers for total nuclear disarmament; (4) a World Disarmament Conference, and negotiations to dismantle foreign military bases and for the reduction of armaments, especially of the major powers; (5) fulfilment of the United Nations decisions for the abolition of the remaining colonial regimes, and boycott of racialism and apartheid; (6) international co-operation for preservation of the environment, development of power and national resources, transport and communications, eradication of the most dangerous diseases, and space and ocean exploration. Alongside this peace programme, the third great lesson of the Congress is the call, in order to achieve these aims of peace and international co-operation, for the united efforts of all the peoples of the world, and specifically unity of all the socialist countries, of the world of national liberation and of the international working class. Differences of concrete conditions and of consequent appropriate paths of advance need to be approached with understanding. But any division only plays into the hands of the common enemy. At the heart of this aim of unity was set out the vital aim of unity of the vanguard, represented by the international communist movement.

Capitalism in Crisis

The sickness of the economy of the capitalist world today is most characteristically expressed by two features which are universally recognised as scourges, but for which no solution has been found: inflation and mass unemployment. The United Nations' Economic Committee for Europe reported in March that 'inflation in Western Europe last year was stronger and more widespread than at any time in the past twenty years.' When the Chancellor of the Exchequer Barber sought to perform a conjuror's trick with his budget, to present his programme for making the rich richer and imposing new burdens on the workers as if it were an act of universal benevolence, it was noticeable that with studious silence he avoided any attempt to offer an answer to the two key problems in Britain's situation which would have been the main concern of any serious Chancellor: the rocketing inflation and soaring unemployment. This silence was the less surprising, since Government policy is in practice the primary cause of both. It is a notorious deception to present the wage battle as the cause of inflation, when the ceaseless struggle of wages to catch up with the ceaselessly rising inflation, or even, in the case of the most strongly organised sections, to

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anticipate inflation, is a secondary effect, not the primary cause. The primary cause lies in the realm of government policy, which has continuously ever since the war imposed on the economy heavy burdens of unproductive expenditure for reactionary policies on a scale far exceeding that of any other European capitalist country; has imposed crushing taxation on consumption goods to pay for this waste (the planned substitution of value-added tax for purchase tax and the selective employment tax will mean in fact a still heavier burden on the cost of living); has promoted an astronomical annual total of private overseas capital investment at the expense of the needed home economic development; and has simultaneously restricted the economy, with crushing credit rates, to limit the satisfaction of consumers' demands and brandish the whip of unemployment against the workers.

Bogus Fight Against Inflation

The deception of the Government's claim to fight inflation (meaning thereby the fight against wage increases and to restrict the social services), when in fact their policy is its main cause, was shown in a less widely-noticed sentence in the Chancellor's budget speech, when he revealed the implicit assumption of inflation in the Government's calculations. In presenting his economic targets for the coming year he announced his plan for a growth rate of only three per cent (thus ensuring high unemployment and a large volume of unused resources), while planning for an increase in the money supply by twelve per cent. It is obvious, if these two figures are set together, that this implies a government plan for nine per cent inflation during the year. In the United States President Nixon, in his State of the Union Message, boasted that 'the tide of inflation has turned', and that 'inflation will be further reduced this year.' But in his immediately following Economic Report on February 1 he announced that, in pursuance of his aim of 'a new American revolution', he would practise an 'expansionary public economic policy' which, he claimed, 'would achieve a goal we have not seen in the American economy for many years: full prosperity without war, full prosperity without inflation.' In practice, the war and the inflation are equally evident. While in Britain the total number of unemployed in April, returned as 814,000, was the highest since the war, with further redundancy sackings on every side, now also in the regions of previous higher employment, in the United States the official return of registered unemployed in January was no less than six per cent or 5.4 million workers, and the *Wall Street Journal*

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on February 8 recognised that the official figure covered only those registered as unemployed and left out of account many more in fact out of work.

Japanese 'Economic Miracle'

Faced with the inescapable realities of the crisis conditions in the capitalist countries of Europe and America the apologists of capitalism seek to find consolation by proclaiming the marvels of the 'Japanese economic miracle'. Has not Japan, the deprived, defeated, occupied power, risen miraculously from the ashes to become the new industrial giant, outstripping Britain, France and even West Germany, and now ranking third in the world measure of industrial output, coming only after the United States and the Soviet Union? Is not this a marvellous demonstration of the efficiency of modern capitalism? Is not this a growth rate which has even in some years exceeded socialist growth rates, and thus pointed the true way to the world's future? Not so fast. This is not the first 'economic miracle' which the decaying capitalist world has proclaimed during this half-century of the advancing socialist revolution. There was the 'economic miracle' of the temporary 'stabilisation' and 'restoration of the gold standard' of the nineteen-twenties, whose inner weakness we analysed at the time and whose future collapse we predicted—as it turned out correctly—in the Notes on 'The Gold Standard' in March 1925. There was the 'economic miracle' of the Dawes Plan. The ascent of Western Germany, with lavish American credits, from Bevin's 'slum' to the economically strongest European capitalist power, was until recently a much favoured 'economic miracle'; but of late a note of doubt has begun to creep in. The Japanese 'economic miracle' is not really a new marvel, but the repetition of an old and familiar story, the old paradox described by Sartre in his *Altona* illuminating the principle that 'The Loser Wins'.

The Parable of Steel

Japan in defeat was disarmed and forbidden to have modern weapons, and in the 1951 Peace Treaty was assigned a limit of 171,000 ground troops and 37,000 naval personnel. The Japanese capitalists during this past quarter of a century have been free from the handicap of the crushing arms burden which has weighed down their competitors in the United States, Britain, France and eventually West Germany. Japanese industry was bombed and heavily devastated in the war, and had to be rebuilt almost from scratch. Billions

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of dollars of credits were advanced by the United States to occupied Japan in order to build up Japanese capitalism as its faithful satellite in East Asia. But the destruction of the old and the building of the new has meant that Japanese industry is now rebuilt with the most modern technology, while its rivals have been weighed down with an inheritance of older equipment. This has been most strikingly demonstrated in the production of steel, the changes in the technique of which were examined in a significant survey in the *Guardian* of April 14. Britain in the nineteenth century had once led the world in the then new method of open-hearth steel making. But the most modern process, known as the Basic Oxygen Steel Making Process (BOS), with something like three times the productivity, was only developed in the nineteen-fifties, at first in Austria, and had demonstrated its superiority by the late fifties, just when the Japanese steel industry was being rebuilt. As a result the Japanese steel industry has now the most modern equipment. In 1969 seventy-three per cent of Japanese steel came from the new furnaces. By that year Japan had 70 million tons BOS capacity, as against the United States 58 million, West Germany 25 million, and Britain 11 million. Today Japan is preparing to export steel to Britain, while the British steel industry is closing down works and dismissing skilled workers with redundancy notices. In the jungle of capitalism the last becomes first, and the first becomes last.

The Reverse Side of the 'Miracle'

Does this mean that Japanese capitalism is immune from the contradictions of capitalism? On the contrary. Having established themselves as the world's third industrial power, and having extended their economic penetration and increasingly dominant economic role in all the non-socialist countries of East Asia, the Japanese rulers are no longer content to remain an American satellite, but are aspiring to an independent role as a world power. The plan to initiate rapid increase of the armed forces to the scale of a modern power is now being actively pressed by the military leaders and their supporters. At the same time class contradictions are extreme. The brilliant façade of technological and trading success has been built on a basis of intensive exploitation of the working people. If Japan is third in the world's scale in terms of the gross national product, Japan is sixteenth in the measure of income per head. The workers in Japan have fought stormy battles; and the trade union, socialist and communist movement, has proved its strength most recently in the successes of the communist-socialist united front in the first

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stage of the local elections during the first half of April, with the trebling of the number of communist deputies elected to prefectural assemblies, and with the candidates of the united front elected governors of Tokyo and Osaka, the country's biggest cities. Ruling reaction in Japan is seeing with alarm the perspective that has opened.

President Nixon's Dilemma

But the real heart of the problems of the present stage of modern capitalism needs to be seen in the situation which is now developing in its main citadel, the United States. Alike in the home situation and in its world role, the United States and its people are torn between conflicting policies. The old Dulles megalomania of invincible American economic and military superiority dominating two-thirds of the world, spreading American armed forces in a vast array of countries all over the non-socialist world, strangling popular revolutions and maintaining satellite governments, and even dreaming of containing and undermining the socialist world, has ended in bankruptcy. Despite the blood-stained military adventures and crimes against many peoples, the historic line of advance of our era, the advance of the socialist revolution and national liberation has gone forward. The old strategy failed to strangle the Chinese revolution; it failed in Korea; it is failing in Vietnam. The Dulles policy was based on the assumption, repeatedly proclaimed by all the political and military leaders of American imperialism of that era, that the US would supply the dollars and the arms, while other nations would supply the men to fight and die. But the Korean war cost the lives of 54,000 American soldiers; and the Vietnam war, alongside the horrors inflicted on the Vietnam people, is piling up the numbers of young American conscripts killed, so that extending sections of the American people not previously politically active have been stirred to demand in anger why they should be involved in this needless war against a people who only ask to be left alone.

Bourbons of Washington

The present rulers of American imperialism are still unwilling to learn the lesson of the present situation, that it is time to end the role of 'world gendarme', the anti-communist hysteria and manipulation of governments and internal politics in other countries, and enter on the alternative path of consistent and serious peaceful relations and co-operation with the new world of socialism and national liberation. This is the future which Franklin Roosevelt, the ablest American President of the modern era, was seeking to promote

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when death took him, and which was glimpsed for a moment during those last weeks of reappraisal by President Kennedy, whereupon they killed him. Confronted with the bankruptcy of their strategy abroad and popular anger at home, the present rulers of the United States profess to proclaim their aim of withdrawal from the entanglement of foreign wars and over-extension of their forces. Simultaneously, in panic at the prospect of the peoples advancing to communism wherever they withdraw, in practice they extend their military adventures in the name of withdrawal, as shown in the invasion of Laos. President Nixon is the embodiment of all the vicious contradictions of this present stage of American ruling class policy.

Call of May Day to the British People

It is in this dangerous international situation that the British people have the high opportunity and responsibility to turn the course of events. For there is no doubt that the support given by the Heath Government to Nixon's war in Vietnam (not only political and diplomatic support, but also, as recent revelations have shown, practical support in training and in passing on experience from the war against the Malayan people) is involving the British people in joint responsibility for this shameful war of aggression. But if the popular campaign could compel the withdrawal of this support, this would be the most powerful act of solidarity with the just struggle of the people of Vietnam and with the extending popular fight in the US against the war. Similarly the Heath Government has involved the British people in providing arms to the infamous racialist regime in South Africa (the anti-Soviet pretence as the supposed pretext for the supply of arms has long passed into the background, and every current experience of the technique of repressive war against a popular liberation movement has shown the role of helicopters precisely in such a war, as in the Laos invasion). The Heath Government opens exchanges with the racialist regime of Rhodesia. In Europe the Heath Government leads the opposition to block the European Security Conference demanded by the majority of European governments and utilises the West Berlin issue to seek to hinder the ratification of the treaties between West Germany and the socialist countries. Heath at Bonn openly sounded the anti-Soviet note in his attitude to British participation in the Common Market. In the most recent communications with the French Government Heath has proposed, according to the statement of the Dutch Foreign Minister, an Anglo-French nuclear force,

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which would inevitably open the way for the participation of West Germany. All this is a menace to the British people, and the counterpart of the offensive on standards, the social services and working class rights at home.

Testing Time for Action

This extreme offensive of Tory reaction calls for the strongest resistance by all the working class and progressive forces in every sphere of the battle. The local elections in May will give an initial opportunity for the expression of popular anger against Toryism. The industrial and political fight is today inseparably united. But at this moment the decisive test of action is in industry. The National Delegate Conference called by the Liaison Committee for April 24 represents a further stage in the gathering of forces for the battle. The mobilisation of the entire strength of the organised working class to compel the withdrawal of the Trade Union Bill will open the way to the political defeat of the Tory Government. At the same time such a mobilisation for action would provide the conditions for the changes in the political labour movement, in the direction of unity and militant policies, which are essential if Toryism is to be defeated on the political field. Unity in action of the working class and all opponents of Toryism, alike on the home front and on the great international issues arising, is the call of this May Day in the testing time of these critical months now before us.

R.P.D.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The First National Convention for the Workers' Charter was held under the auspices of the National Minority Movement at the Bermondsey Town Hall on April 12. There were present 788 delegates, of whom 213 were from outside London . . .

The Convention represented a big step forward in the campaign for the Workers' Charter, instituted by the National Minority Movement in August last year. The proposal for a Workers' Charter of Immediate Demands was made after a discussion by an Executive Committee of that body in which the situation in Britain was thoroughly analysed. The economic crisis was recognised as being still in its early stages and the intense development of the capitalist offensive, led by the Labour Government with the active collaboration of the official trade union movement, was anticipated.

(From 'The Workers' Charter Convention', by John A. Mahon, *Labour Monthly*, May 1931.)

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Ken Gill
National Officer*
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
Technical Section (DATA)

WHERE do we go from here? This legitimate question refers not to the strategy to be employed by the trade union movement in the fight against the Industrial Relations Bill, but to the tactics which must undergo a change in view of the decisions of the TUC on March 18. The strategical needs are clear. Industrial action points the only way. The failure of the unions dedicated to industrial action to win the majority of those affiliated to the TUC has been greeted with sighs of relief from the establishment and with considerable disappointment by the many thousands of dedicated activists who fought for a policy of struggle. In many ways this disappointment has exaggerated the negative aspect of the decisions. No one who remembers the beginnings of the campaign a few months ago would really have imagined that the TUC General Council could have unwillingly shifted towards a firm stand as they repeatedly did during the period of pressure. No one at the Liaison Committee Conference in November could have anticipated with any confidence the massive involvement of the Engineering Union on March 1 and March 18, and the participation of many other sections of the working class swept along by the battle in the engineering industry.

Not since 1926 have millions of our people been involved in an industrial struggle for something beyond the immediate and specific wage claims of a section. But in 1926 the struggle was not for advance but for defence of the miners who were having their wages cut. They, the leading trade union, were the object of a slashing attack from the ruling class at that time. On this occasion workers were being asked to take action on an issue as yet not appearing in concrete terms as assaults on workers. Not since 1920, when a united movement said 'No' to a war on the new Soviet Union, has the British working class taken such a nakedly political stand.

From modest beginnings, based on unofficial leadership, people have been involved in struggle and millions have been forced, by action, into a questioning, examining position. Where do we go now? We must recognise the positive achievements. We then have to re-establish the basic strategy of struggle. *The truth is that no attack*

* Here writing in his personal capacity.

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can be warded off, no gains made, no change of government achieved, no protection guaranteed without industrial action. The principle that the fight has to take this form remains central to all future tactics. Before any specific aims are decided, this theme must be fixed as the pivot of the campaign.

There must be a concentrated effort to extend the support for the principle of industrial action beyond those unions which voted against the condemnation of industrial action in point seven of the TUC proposals. The September TUC must be the scene of another demand that industrial action is accepted as the major method of struggle. This does not mean that it would necessarily take the form of one-day protest stoppages. It must take the form of a commitment to take industrial action at the first blow at any worker under the provisions of the new Act. It must provide guarantees of support for all unions which defend themselves against attack and maintain their normal trade union activity.

Thus there should be a formulation around which wider sections of the trade union movement will throw their voting weight. A statement that the TUC and affiliated unions would support industrial action in defence of trade union rights would transform the situation. If this principle is won then the Croydon proposals one to seven of March 18 can be seen in a more dramatic and positive light. The trade union movement cannot accept the defeatism displayed by a number of trade union leaders after the failure to win the TUC to demand non- or de-registration as a condition of membership. Members in every trade union must win a declaration that under no circumstances will it register. This will of course lay open to risk the funds and the legal sanctity of all the structures and institutions of the trade union movement. At the same time the need to struggle will become more and more apparent, and false divisions between official and unofficial action will not be created.

The General Council already has the power to render assistance to a union which encounters difficulty as a result of not registering. This power, interpreted in a positive way, could force the General Council off the fence and into the arena of action.

The second proposal—the repeal of the Act—can lay the ground for an ideological struggle within the Labour Party to force the charlatans of *In Place of Strife* into opposition or, better, off the political stage. This section of the report could be easily achieved. If one takes into account the fact that 80 per cent of the finances of the Labour Party comes from trade union sources, a little emulation of the City could help. The City takes little time to collect

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its tribute from successful Tory Governments. The same dedication to a return on investments should commend itself to our side of the class barrier.

The third point—collective agreements and the demand that unions should not enter into legally binding commitments—will require on many occasions militant pressure. The by-passing of the Commission on Industrial Relations (CIR) will mean the death of that organisation, more certainly than the disappearance of George Woodcock. The National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC), if boycotted, will depend for its existence on employer references and for its constitution on the employer appointees. The decision to maintain Bridlington disputes procedure provides a base for confrontation where the battlefield can be chosen by the trade union movement. Again, the determination of the organised working class to commit themselves to struggle is of absolute importance. The traditional but now illegal task of winning the closed shop should continue. This will provide the challenge on an issue of specific and concrete value to workers, as such clashes usually accompany pay demands. The refusal to accept the new employer-orientated agency shops is counterposed by the maintenance of the traditional principles. Here solidarity can provide yet another confrontation with the Government in its determination to break internal discipline. A commitment to industrial action on these issues can rapidly promote struggle. This struggle can be timed by the trade unions so that battlefields are not selected by the opponent.

The by-passing in point five of statutory bodies, like the CIR or NIRC, can develop the independent and self-sustaining organisation of the working class alienating it from the state. There is no reason, providing each membership commits its own union to such a course, why this cannot be a significant feature in the undermining and final rejection of state interference. The sixth point, which refers to assistance to unions, has been interpreted by Vic Feather in an extremely limited manner. He stated that this will mean help in covering the legal costs of defending an action: hardly a recipe for struggle. This should be extended to ensure that financial support, together with industrial backing, is given to unions who confront the state and its new laws. This would then have a meaning well beyond the intentions of some of its authors.

Finally, the united action clause. This describes the TUC's negative approach to industrial action, and needs revising positively. The final vote effectively emasculated any immediate possibility of united struggle and must be reversed.

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There is now a need for action committees to police the tactics of employers in localities. They can alert the whole movement to attacks on shop stewards or on trade union organisation. It would seem that the long dormant trades councils could play a role here. There is little doubt that many trade union leaderships will be unwilling to face a clash. Local committees can be alerting the movement. Vigilance on the site of the attack will prevent the burying of issues.

It would seem that the days have passed for the united day stoppage in protest as a result of the TUC decisions. A new level of struggle is required. The formulations accepted by Congress present a key to that future struggle, providing we do not reject them as irrelevant or accept the interpretations foisted on us by the apostles of surrender. The unofficial movement must be revived while the official movement must be pressurised to achieve a united class using industrial action against the bill.

EMERGENCY DONATIONS APPEAL

A most welcome response to the urgent statement we published in last month's issue has begun to come in from readers. In our statement we explained how the Government's postal offensive, cutting off two-thirds of our circulation for two months, had involved us in a net deficit of over £1,000, which needed to be very quickly made good as we were in no position to carry such a deficit.

We are glad to be able to report that a little over half this sum has been already received, but the need to make up the remainder continues urgent. As explained, these emergency donations are separate from the current £100 a month we aim at for our normal budget.

EDITORIAL BOARD

LONDON REGION
NATIONAL GRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

May Day Greetings
from London's craft printers
at our new address

W. T. BOOROFF, SECRETARY · 75 SHOE LANE, E.C.4.

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Crisis of Nationalised Industries

TORIES AND THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Alan Fisher
General Secretary
National Union of Public Employees

IT has been a characteristic of British governments in the post-war period that—whenever the economy runs into trouble—the instinctive reaction is to cut back public expenditure, particularly that part of it concerned with services such as health, housing and general welfare. The present government is no exception to the rule, but there is an important difference in both attitude and ultimate objective.

Previously, most attacks on those parts of public expenditure crucial to working class living standards have been presented as regrettable decisions forced on a reluctant government by the need to restore, or protect, Britain's balance of payments situation. They were publicly justified by the government as temporary expedients necessitated by external circumstances which demanded sacrifices in 'the national interest'. Needless to say, such explanations found small favour with trade unionists who pointed out that such views were based on a mistaken order of social and economic priorities.

Since last June, however, the Tory Government has mounted an attack on the public services on an entirely different premise. All of the actions aimed at the public services have been presented, not as a distasteful medicine necessary to relieve a temporary ailment, but as part of a longer-term treatment designed to change the social character of the public services.

When Tory Minister John Davies, in his now infamous 'lame ducks' speech, scathingly referred to the 'soft, sodden morass of subsidised incompetence' he was not merely setting out the Tory approach to industrial policy. He was articulating the views of Tunbridge Wells Tories all over the country on the total span of social policies; and they are views which now determine the Government's whole approach to the public services.

For public employees this resurrection of the Victorian brimstone

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and treacle mentality is of fundamental importance: it confronts us with a situation which could mean a depression of earnings levels and a reduction of job opportunities as the public services are subjected to continuous hostile government pressure.

This, however, is not the complete catalogue. Many workers in the local government and health services most likely to be affected by a quantitative and qualitative reduction in those services are in the low pay category. They are the people most affected by government measures such as higher charges for school meals, abolition of school and welfare milk, increased health charges and higher council house rents; they are also the people who will get little or nothing from the Government's changes in income tax.

Thus the very measures which hit their pockets hardest by increasing the cost of the family budget are the same measures which, on the other side of the balance sheet, will prompt a reduction in the public services in which they are employed.

To give just one specific example. The increased charges for school meals will force large numbers of working class children to give up school dinners. This in turn will cause many local education authorities either to reduce the number of school meals staff employed or to reduce their hours—and their pay. A working class mother who puts in twenty hours a week in the school meals service to help supplement her husband's wages will therefore be hit both ways round: a straightforward situation in which 'heads the Government wins, tails the public employee loses'.

Public employees have already fought the first round of this battle with the Government—and won. Last year's six-week strike of local council workers—which also brought pay increases for hospital workers—was more than just an attempt to win more money for a particular category of the lower-paid. It was a spirited defence of the public services against an attack by a Government which is determined to minimise the role of the public services in the community life of Britain.

But public employees are under no illusions: we know that there are tougher fights ahead. And it is because we realise that our members' pay packets and job prospects are intimately linked with the survival of the public services that we emphasise that our immediate wage policies have much wider economic and social implications. We also realise that in the final analysis the progressive expansion of the public services can only be part of a whole programme of radical change in Britain. It is on this long term objective that our Union has set its sights.

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1971 is the Centenary of the Trade Union Act of 1871 which in common with all other legislation up to the Trades Disputes Act of 1965 is to be destroyed by the Industrial Relations Bill.
This May Day, in greeting fellow trade unionists, we dedicate our Union to the fight for trade union freedom.

George Doughty

Technical and Supervisory Section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (DATA)

NATSOPA

FRATERNAL GREETINGS ON MAY DAY TO ALL TRADE UNIONISTS EVERYWHERE

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS (Constructional Section)

extends fraternal greetings to all workers throughout the world on this May Day 1971

For a defeat of the attacks on the Trade Unions
End the war in Vietnam
For peace and socialist advance

H. BARR, President
E. MARSDEN, General Secretary

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NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (KENT AREA)

EXTENDS MAY DAY GREETINGS TO ALL IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF TRADE UNIONS AND A SOCIALIST BRITAIN

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the Editor and staff of

SOVIET WEEKLY

Tribune

the leading socialist weekly

sends fraternal greetings to all socialists and trade unionists throughout the world.
For socialism, peace and freedom.

TRIBUNE
24 St. John Street
London, E.C.1

NATIONAL UNION OF SHEET METAL WORKERS, COPPERSMITHS AND HEATING AND DOMESTIC ENGINEERS

The Executive Committee greets all members and fellow trade unionists on this day, which annually affirms the resolution of all to work in unity for common aims.

R. W. BUCK
General Secretary

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TURNING POINT IN INDIA

S. G. Sardesai*

NO previous election in India generated the heat and fury experienced in the recent parliamentary poll. The forces of progress and reaction were pitted against each other in bitter conflict, often leading to violence. The results are clearly indicative of a turning point in our post-independence history. The verdict of the people has been decidedly in favour of a speedy introduction of economic and social reforms.

The unexpectedly sweeping victory of the Congress led by Indira Gandhi under the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' (remove poverty) should not make one lose sight of the gravity of the situation as it stood on the eve of the elections.

On the one hand, the economic situation in the country had deteriorated alarmingly since the mid-sixties. Prices had been shooting up month after month for years. Unemployment was soaring. Pressures exercised by foreign and internal monopolists, as also the landed interests, secured concession after concession from the government. Particularly after the split in the Congress in 1969, the political offensive of the parties of right-wing reaction, called the Grand Alliance, developed into a menace. Their aggressiveness was seen not only in parliament but in the unleashing of massive communal riots in many provinces and of linguistic chauvinism in a few.

On the other hand, mass struggles of workers, peasants and youth also reached a new high in the period. After the split in the Congress, though Mrs Gandhi's party was reduced to a minority in parliament, major banks were nationalised with the support of left-wing parties. An attempt was made to abolish the privy purses of the princes, though it was defeated by the Supreme Court. Under the circumstances, the atmosphere in the elections was one of extreme tension, bitterness and also of uncertainty.

It was the healthy instinct and sense of realism of the masses that led to the rout of the parties of reaction whose strength has been reduced from 140 in the last parliament to 46 in the new one. The Congress led by Indira Gandhi has increased its strength from 220 to 350. The Communist Party of India (CPI) has maintained its strength of 24. The Communist Party—Marxist (CPM)

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has increased its strength from 19 to 25, though 20 of these have been elected from one state alone, viz. West Bengal, and two from adjoining Tripura. The CPI's candidates have been elected from eight states in different parts of the country.

The key slogan of the CPI in the election was the defeat of right-wing reaction and the election of left and democratic candidates, including progressive sections in the Congress, to bring into existence a more left and democratically oriented parliament capable of making radical changes in the constitution for rapid socio-economic advance. In the new parliament, progressive forces are distinctly stronger and the reactionary forces much weaker than before. In the main, the strategical-tactical line of the CPI has proved correct.

But there is no ground for complacency. The election results also indicate that bitter struggles and complicated problems lie ahead and it is necessary to assimilate the lessons arising from the electoral verdict to determine the new tasks of the democratic forces.

Firstly, the electoral defeat of the grand alliance does not mean that reaction has been eliminated. In some states, its parties secured a very substantial number of votes. The entire bureaucratic apparatus, corrupted by vested interests, has always sabotaged the implementation of progressive measures in the past. Its power continues as before. Though the number of Congress MPs seriously committed to radical measures is much greater now, reaction is still strongly represented in the Congress Parliamentary Party. Members of the Syndicate Congress (the reactionary wing which split off in 1969) are trooping back in a massive landslide to the Indira Congress. In the new situation, the pressure of monopoly and landed interests inside the Congress is bound to grow.

Much more serious is the division and conflict among the left parties. The Praja Socialist Party and the Samyukta Socialist Party, two of the four major left parties in the country, have been almost eliminated in the election. The parliamentary strength of the Praja Socialist Party has been reduced from 13 to 2, and that of the Samyukta Socialist Party from 23 to 3.

The electoral success of the CPM in West Bengal is striking. But it is based to no small degree on its policy of individual terrorism and murder, supported by a major section of the police and bureaucracy, directed against all other left and democratic parties. This has created an extremely grave political crisis and constitutional stalemate in West Bengal, bringing grist to the mill of reaction. Because of its thoroughly disruptive policies, the CPM has lost

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heavily in every state except West Bengal and Tripura. It has been virtually reduced to the position of a regional party.

There is not the remotest doubt that if the left parties had stood together in the elections, their combined representation in parliament would have been far greater. As it is, the Congress has gained at the cost both of the right and of the left. This need not have happened.

The massive vote for the Congress is not a vote for a party, as such, in the traditional sense. The Prime Minister herself has stated that it is an expression of the impatience of the people for the rapid removal of economic and social disparities. In the absence of left unity, this mass sentiment plumped dominantly for the Congress as a sheet anchor for a strong, stable and progressive government.

Hence, if the problems of unemployment, high prices and land are to be firmly and earnestly grappled with, if the situation is not to stagnate leading to disillusionment, apathy and worse, left and democratic unity of the forces both outside and inside the Congress, for pressure in parliament and mass actions outside, is the burning need of the hour.

Significant and welcome indications of such rethinking are already there. The Samyukta Socialist Party is in a crisis, with vast sections demanding a break with the policy of allying with the right in the name of fighting Indira Gandhi, which was pursued by the SSP leadership in the election. The demand for left unity is growing in the Praja Socialist Party. With its electoral achievement in West Bengal, the CPM leadership is, at present, riding a high horse. But it has to think of the severe setback received by it over the rest of the country, including Kerala.

The beginning of new efforts at left unity will, most likely, be in the sphere of united working class and peasant actions. All the left parties are rooted in the trade union and kisan movements. Joint actions on political demands for radical amendments of the constitution, for the abolition of princely privileges and purses without compensation, and other measures are also in the offing.

There is every reason to expect that innumerable young Congress MPs, and the huge numbers of new youth attracted towards the Congress because of the new orientation given to it by Indira Gandhi, will link up with the forces of the left outside the Congress in various ways. A characteristic feature of the youth now drawn towards the Congress is that it does not suffer from anti-Communism.

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Most of them have a healthy, co-operative attitude towards Communists.

The general election this time has been such a whirlwind that its implications cannot be fully seen so soon after its results. But there is no doubt that despite dark and difficult patches the prospects of a united left and democratic offensive for a popular advance have clearly improved.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS & STRUCTURAL WORKERS

sends May Day Greetings to all Trade Unionists in the United Kingdom and throughout the world, and wishes them peace and prosperity.

DANIEL McGARVEY, President

The South Wales Miners

send warm fraternal greetings to all readers of Labour Monthly

GLYN WILLIAMS - President
EMLYN WILLIAMS - Vice-President
DAVID FRANCIS - General Secretary

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LYRICS IN HONOUR OF ALAN BUSH

Nancy Bush

On the occasion of the reception to celebrate the seventieth birthday of Alan Bush, at which messages were received from musicians all over the world, including Sir Michael Tippett and Shostakovich and Kabalevsky of the Soviet Union, three songs in his honour, written by Nancy Bush and set to music by three of his pupils, were sung by Richard Wood. This special tribute was ingeniously kept a secret from him until the moment of the reception. The poems by Nancy Bush merit a wider audience and we are pleased to have permission to print them and in doing so to express the tribute which all our readers will feel towards Alan Bush and Nancy Bush.—Ed. *LM.*

The New Age

The sun of certainty sank down.
Over the prosperous fields a cloud
Trailed its long shadow,
And western man, a stranger long to doubt,
Felt the earth tremble and looked up in fear.
So the world moved
Into this dark, this unknown century.

Many lament our time,
Age of lost confidence, of want and war;
But here stands one, born at the century's turn,
who said: In this age would I live,
And only this.
For from the ash of war a spark of hope
Begins to glow, kindly and burn;
A different life is born, though stark and strange,
A long time locked in hardship.

Only in man, he said, I set my faith,
In man, the paragon of all the creatures.
Now he must rise in his full power,
Hold in his hand the threads of energy
And tread the hundred pathways of destruction
Still undestroyed.
Now he must conquer or be lost for ever.

Music by Irene Armitage

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Music

Lifted on music's wing
Thoughts into vivid being start.
Pain is more fierce and joy more keen,
And love and fear have sharper barbs
To pierce the living heart.

First cradled in his mind
In secret, heard by him alone,
Sound out of silence sprang
And spread its echoing arch above,
All barriers overthrown.

Music became his voice
To wake an indifferent world of men,
A voice that all could understand
Till they, so long cold-hearted, felt
Humanity again.

But not enough to spin
A web of dreams, where those who hear
May drowse with comfortable thoughts,
Forgetting actual pain and joy,
Forgetting fear.

Music for him must move
Across the burning fields of strife.
The drum, the beating drum of hope,
Shall rouse the dreamer, draw him back
From sleep of death to life.

Music by John Miller

The Choice

How fast, how fast the tread of time.
The world, new energy unpent
And burdened with its weight of wealth,
Spins through a heedless firmament.

The earth and sky, once limitless,
Are shrunken to a little space.
Forces for life, for death, are yoked
And harnessed for the final race.

No rest, no rest, while we have power
To bind up havoc once again,
To turn the world from the world's end
And save the threatened lives of men.

This is an age of greatness. Here
And now I stand and make my choice,
One among thousand, not alone,
By strength of many stronger grown,
As with man's onward march I march
And living, I rejoice.

Music by Aubrey Bowman

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THE BILL OF INTOLERANCE

Vishnu Sharma
Executive Secretary
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

THE Tory Government passed the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, followed by the Labour Party's acceptance of the 'reality' of immigration control. Both major parties are now paralysed on the question of numbers of immigrants from what is termed the 'new Commonwealth' (by which they mean the coloured immigrants). Mr Callaghan's dictum that 'the less the numbers, the better the race relations' has laid down the basis for the policies of both parties. This policy itself is an incitement to the public to regard newcomers as a menace.

Since the first slip was taken down the slippery slope of racial discrimination in immigration policy in 1962, there has been no end to the slide to racialism. Successive governments have tried to win popular support by cutting down the numbers of immigrants from the new Commonwealth countries with the intervals between restrictive legislation getting shorter.

The Labour Government brought forward a White Paper in August 1965, putting a ceiling of 8,500 on employment vouchers and abolished category C vouchers. (In practice the numbers of vouchers issued annually has dropped and is now only in the region of 4,000 per year.) The Commonwealth Immigrants Act followed, with the requirement in 1969 of entry certificates for male fiances from the Commonwealth before coming to the UK for marriage and settlement, and for compulsory entry certificates for dependants of Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK. Various 'administrative' procedures were introduced, involving further restrictive practices just to appease prejudice because they were thought to be 'good vote catching measures' by Jim Callaghan. It was he who laid down the foundations in 1968 on which the Tories are now constructing a thick wall devised to keep Asians, Africans, Chinese, Caribbeans out of Britain.

The Immigration Bill 1971 dismantles immigration control over millions of people whose parents or grandparents were born in the UK, notably of British extraction, because they 'belong' to this country, while laying down a system of indentured labour for 'non-

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belongers' who will have to suffer repressive restrictions on their stay in Britain.

The bill extends the powers of the Home Secretary in connection with the deportation of the whole family of a person against whom a deportation order is signed (CL. 3 (5), (6)) and he has open-ended power to deport if he considers it to be 'conducive to the public good'. There is no appeal against this. Even without a deportation order Immigration Officers are empowered to expel any person accused of illegal entry through summary expulsion (CL. (16) Sch. 2, paragraph 9). The bill also extends powers under the 1959 Act to repatriate any mental in-patients who are classed as non-patrials.

The bill greatly strengthens the powers of the authorities to enforce the control system. A wider range of criminal offences are created, most of which justify arrest without warrant (CL. 24 (3), 25 (3)). Maximum penalties are increased and a new power is introduced to search premises with a warrant if illegal immigrants are suspected to be there (Sec. 2, paragraph 15 (27)). Much is still unknown about how police powers will be exercised. Non-patrials will at no time have a right to the acquisition of UK citizenship (Sec. 1). All have to qualify by: (a) five years' residential proof, (b) proof of good character, (c) sufficient knowledge of English, (d) proof of intention to reside in the UK.

The clause which delighted Enoch Powell is clause 29 about 'voluntary repatriation', in which he found 'the seed and hope for the future'. One can easily imagine in what direction the seed will blow.

At the present time when the Tory Government seems determined to pass the Industrial Relations Bill to attack every section of the working class, they are introducing the Immigration Bill 1971 deliberately to single out black sections of the community and attack them separately. But the decision to do this affects the white community.

And there is hardly a murmer against the Immigration Bill in the high ranks of even the most progressive leadership of the trade unions. The bill clearly is a racialist measure, a threat to all black people and their future in the UK, and creates insecurity in the minds of immigrants from the new Commonwealth. This is not only a blow to individuals, but will also lead to worsening of race relations in this International Year to Combat Racial Discrimination. It must concern those who care for civil liberties, human rights and democratic movements.

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COMMON MARKET AND SOVEREIGNTY

Gordon Schaffer
President, British Peace Committee

EVER since the Tory government started abandoning all pretence that they would be able to make conditions for British entry into the West European Common Market, I have been trying to get an answer to the question: 'How are they going to legislate for the abandonment of British sovereignty, in favour of the bureaucrats of Brussels?' For make no mistake this is what entry into EEC entails. Mr Ernst Wohlfarth, legal adviser to the Council of Ministers' Secretariat, spells it all out for us in the latest issue of *European Community*, the official EEC journal. The Council of Ministers, he says, 'under the Rome Treaty resembles the Bundesrat in Bismarck's 1871 German Reich constitution, under which the allied princes exercised their federal rights through their plenipotentiaries. The centre of imperial power lay with the Bundesrat.'

He goes on to explain that 'Council regulations are in effect European laws and are directly valid in all member states.' They have precedence over conflicting national legislation and 'in particular they *are binding on national Courts* and administrative authorities.' 'Directives become effective once they have been communicated to the government of the member state concerned and *the government must apply them at national level, by amending the relevant law or laws.*' These directives, which apply to all the fields covered by the Rome Treaty, must be based on proposals by the European Commission—the non-elected civil service of EEC and they can be overturned only by a unanimous decision of the member states. Mr Wohlfarth cites some of the major sectors in which the Commission through the Council has the right to issue regulations and directives as 'agriculture, free movement of workers, transport, rules governing competition and the European Social Fund, capital movements and harmonisation of legislation.' So, to give the EEC officials their due, they have made no attempt to disguise the fact that Britain must surrender her sovereignty, and that, as Hugh Gaitskell stressed, it means for Britain the end of a thousand years of history.

But how is it to be done? A simple resolution by the two Houses of Parliament, endorsing the terms for entry accepted by Mr Rippon, cannot change the laws of the land. It seems clear that each clause of the Treaty of Rome will have to be examined to see if its application

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involves the repeal or the amendment of any existing laws. But that is not all: the Commission in an official publication of October 1969 (*The European Commission's revised opinion on the applications for membership from the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Norway*) says plainly that applicants at the beginning of negotiations 'will have to state their agreement not only with the principle of accepting what has been attained by the Community—in other words the Treaties plus the decisions taken since these came into force—but also in full knowledge of the measures, agreed on, or in course of implementation within the Community.'

We can take it for granted that Mr Rippon has given these assurances. So parliament will have to examine the directives and recommendations issued since EEC was formed to see what laws must be repealed or amended to bring them into force. And just one minor obstacle: the Treaty and all the other documents, which will supersede our laws, are in French, German, Italian and Dutch, but not in English. Presumably even Mr Heath will not ask parliament to surrender its sovereignty without being able to read the new laws which it is obliged to accept.

Let us take one or two examples. The document issued in 1969 (cited above) declares that 'state monopolies of a commercial nature will have to be adjusted as provided for by the Treaty of Rome.' This means amendments to the Acts governing the various measures of nationalisation. (Maybe the Tory Government is trying to shed all profit-making sections in advance, so as to pave the way.)

The Commission, in the 1969 document, rejects the British law under which Commonwealth citizens have the right to acquire United Kingdom citizenship after five years residence and insists that these British citizens would not have the same rights as the rest of us of access to the labour market in the other EEC countries. So parliament will have to be asked to amend the Race Relations Act to provide *for* racial discrimination, for no one can doubt that this would mean imposing a colour bar.

One of the latest regulations of the Commission lays down that, until the end of 1972, member countries may negotiate trade treaties with 'Communist countries and other countries whose foreign trade is handled by the state' provided they are authorised to do so by the Commission. After that 'the Commission will negotiate for the Community as a whole.' So we must have a new law making it a criminal offence for business firms or co-operatives to trade with the socialist world. It will be OK to buy wine from Greece, Spain or Portugal, but not from Hungary or Bulgaria.

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The Commission has already introduced a statute to provide for creation of European companies as provided for in article 220 of the Rome Treaty and, according to the 1969 document, this will supersede the laws of the member states and 'the government of the United Kingdom has declared its readiness to modify its legislation to this end.'

Here, of course is the kernel of the matter. EEC is the organisation of the international cartels and significantly in the latest issue of *European Community* there is a review of a book *The European Community Today and Tomorrow*, published by Business International, Geneva, which says, 'the book expresses misgivings at the reluctance of the larger community countries to give up their national sovereignty, especially in such key areas as foreign relations and tax revenues. 'On the other hand,' continues the reviewer, 'it stresses that "a new economic force—the international corporation may provide a strong stimulus to push Western Europe towards unity." If there is to be a united Europe in the next decade, international corporations can provide the necessary momentum.' It could hardly have been put more clearly. But then this revealing book is priced at £25, so the victims of the pre-war international steel cartel in Jarrow and the other distressed areas of Britain are hardly likely to heed the warning.

One could go on, for the Commission has been making regulations and directives for years, not least those providing for an agricultural policy designed to raise prices and pile up huge 'surpluses' in a hungry world, and for taxes like Value Added Tax designed to shift the burden from the rich to the poor.

But one is still left with the question: How is it all going to be done? The Tory government is clearly depending on the Labour pro-marketeers to vote with them and cancel out their own anti-market group when the initial proposal comes before the House. Since the pro-marketeers in the Labour government threw away the last election, presumably they would defy a whip if it is put on under pressure from the rising tide of opposition through the movement. But would they go on voting with the government in the mass of subsequent legislation that will be needed? How long will it take?

But there is a further point. You cannot amend the British constitution because we haven't got one, and no parliament can bind its successor. So Mr Rippon has no authority to commit Britain. He can only commit the present government to put the terms of entry to parliament. Will the EEC agree to accept Britain on these terms? Will they accept that parliament may reject some of the provisions? And

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will even then parliament be prepared to pass an Act providing for EEC regulations automatically to supersede any laws with which they conflict? Turning the Mother of Parliaments into the equivalent of a princedom in Bismarck's German Reich isn't exactly a minor operation, particularly when one remembers that the issue of the Common Market was deliberately excluded from the last general election.

Maybe I am wrong. Maybe Conservative and Labour leaders have agreed that they can smuggle all this through by one simple vote in parliament. But, as far as I can ascertain, neither party leadership has seriously examined the legal and constitutional implications involved. As for the rest of us, I would only answer with a quotation from G. K. Chesterton: 'We are the people of England, and we have not spoken yet.'

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (Scottish Area)

Scottish Miners send May Day greetings to all people struggling for peace and socialism

MICHAEL McGAHEY, President
DAVID BOLTON, Vice-President
WILLIAM McLEAN, General Secretary

The Midlands Region of the Transport & General Workers Union

sends May Day Greetings to Trade Unionists and Socialists in their campaign for a Better Way of Life

On behalf of over 30,000 musicians
THE MUSICIANS' UNION
sends May Day greetings to readers of Labour Monthly

THE SCOTTISH COMMERCIAL MOTORMEN'S UNION

sends May Day Greetings to fellow Trade Unionists throughout the world

Alex H. Kitson
General Secretary

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Fifty Fighting Years (4)

THE ERA OF MAJORITY LABOUR GOVERNMENTS 1945-1971

Andrew Rothstein

FOR the first time in British history, Labour came into office in July 1945 with a majority over all other parties, and elected on a programme *Let Us Face The Future* which promised socialist measures at home and co-operation with peoples abroad who had carried out, or were fighting for, socialist revolutions. It had the ball at its feet.

The programme, said the first Notes of the Month after the election, had 'the united support of the entire working class movement and of the widest sections of democratic opinion.' But, they added, 'the overcoming of the obstacles to their fulfilment will require the utmost united effort.' The obstacles began to make their appearance almost at once—and *Labour Monthly* took up in these new conditions its wartime fight for the maximum concentration of working class power to overcome them. Now it was not just military victory, but the advance to socialism for Britain on all fronts that was at stake. 'The fight to win the peace, both for the world and for Britain, is in full swing,' wrote the Editor in the November issue.

In that number the fight at home was reflected in a brilliant article by William Gallacher MP, or rather a pamphlet (it was reprinted as such, sold out rapidly, and could with advantage be reprinted again today)—on 'What Is Democracy?' For indeed it was already becoming clear that most of the obstacles were being brought forward in the name of democracy. Articles in December by Margot Heinemann ('Cotton Working Party') and by Norah Brown ('The Meaning of the Dockers' Dispute') already hinted at the peril that the Labour Government was not throwing its weight on the side of the workers in the spirit of its election manifesto. Then, in January 1946, Jim Gardner (secretary of the Foundry Workers), in 'Why These Strikes?', spoke of strikes and demonstrations by dockers, gas workers and building workers which reflected 'the absence of a defined policy on wages, a feeling of insecurity from the increasing ratio of unemployment'. At the same time there was (as the Editor noted the following month) concern at the delay in demobilisation despite 'the most urgent needs of home economic reconstruction'—

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and the wholesale sacking of women workers in order to force them back into low-pay jobs (a subject trenchantly analysed in March by Bert Papworth, a member of the General Council of the TUC). Arthur Horner on Coal Industry Nationalisation (February), J. Winter on the Government's 'Investment (Control and Guarantees) Bill' (March), James Davidson on the engineering industry (May), J. R. Campbell in an incisive demand, 'Where Is That Production Drive?' (June), all voiced with increasing insistence a growing feeling in the widest labour movement that the Government was falling back from its declared undertakings.

Then, on July 21, bread rationing was introduced—a shock, coming more than twelve months after the end of the war, which gave the Tories their first opportunity to gain some popularity by unscrupulous propaganda. The Labour Government (the Notes of the Month pointed out in August) had 'largely brought this unpopularity upon itself', by concealing where the responsibility for the world shortage which rationing reflected really lay—with 'the sordid dealings of monopoly capital' in the United States. But at this point the shortcomings in home policy made a fatal junction—the word is not too strong—with those of foreign policy. For the Labour Government's lips were 'sealed by foreign policy'.

For twelve months already, the Notes went on, 'a foreign policy has been adopted which requires table-thumping and "tough attitudes" towards the USSR, but deferential silence towards the US.' And this attitude had achieved its reward: on July 13 a United States loan of £1,000 million had been endorsed by Congress.

In fact, the Labour Government's departures from the foreign policy proclaimed in *Let Us Face The Future*—consolidation of the wartime alliance with the USSR as well as the USA, 'a common bond with the working peoples of all countries who have achieved a new dignity and influence through their long struggles against Nazi tyranny'—had aroused disquiet, and very soon alarm, almost from the day of its formation. By October 1945, William Rust (Editor of the *Daily Worker*) was voicing this feeling at Foreign Secretary Bevin's stubborn support of the monarcho-fascist government in Greece, set up by British military intervention while Churchill was still Prime Minister. That autumn, at the London Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Labour Government's representatives again and again supported 'the millionaire representatives of the USA' against those of the socialist Soviet Union. The December *Labour Monthly* drew attention to Bevin's protest (November 7) that, by suggesting Soviet participation in allied trusteeship for some of

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Italy's African colonies, the USSR was 'cutting across the throat of the British Empire': in other words, the Mediterranean in his view was a British lake. Meanwhile, British administration in occupied Germany was dealing lightly with 44 Nazi murderers in the Belsen death-camp, but coming down with savage penalties on 43 Polish victims in another death-camp, Paderborn, who had disposed of their Nazi torturers: and Britain had joined with Holland in using Japanese troops, formerly occupying Indonesia, against the national movement there.

Developments along these lines were remorselessly logical. On November 29, 1945, Bevin in the House of Commons repudiated the idea that British policy should be based on unity of the 'Big Three' (not only had the wartime Coalition Government proclaimed its allegiance to this, but the United Nations Charter had been drawn up on this foundation, as the first annual report of the Secretary-General pointed out). On the same day, obviously by arrangement, President Truman said publicly that no further Big Three meetings were necessary, and that UNO—where Britain and America commanded a majority—should take over. Both governments were doing their utmost, in the next six months, to prevent far-reaching nationalisations in Czechoslovakia and Romania and to reduce reparations for the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, terribly ravaged by war. In Germany a delegation of the World Federation of Trade Unions, including right-wing leaders of the British, American and French unions, discovered that dismantling of war works, promised by the Potsdam agreement of May 1945, was practically negligible in the West, and only being pushed forward in the East. And farcical elections—under martial law, with all working class parties suppressed—were forced on Greece by the British occupation forces. All this was against strenuous Soviet protests.

It was only logical too that Churchill, in his notorious speech at Fulton, Missouri, at the beginning of March 1946, should have called for a world bloc against the Soviet Union, and that talk of a third world war should have come out into the open in Britain, the US and West Germany. By the end of the year open anti-Soviet speeches by British government spokesmen like Attlee and Bevin were a regular occurrence.

These and similar atrocities involved the maintenance of huge armed forces (by February 1947, as the Notes of the Month pointed out, four wars were raging—in Indo-China, Greece, Palestine and China—in which all the great powers except the USSR were engaged: Britain later added its own war in Malaya). This in turn involved

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massive expenditures, which prevented any serious tackling of the need for modernising British economy and expanding its productive capacities. The disastrous effect of this policy on Britain's commercial and financial position could not, of course, be repaired by the big US loan of July 1946—but it did bring Britain into closer and closer dependence on the United States.

Labour Monthly in issue after issue during these three years kept up its fearless exposures of this perversion of the aims proclaimed at the general election. In September 1946 it was supported by a vote of 2.4 millions to 3.6 millions against Bevin's foreign policy at the TUC; this was followed by a first revolt of 58 Labour MPs protesting, and nearly 100 MPs abstaining, in a vote on that policy (December 1946); and in April 1947, 85 MPs opposed a Conscription Bill on these grounds, while Bevin's policy received the narrowest margin of support at the Co-operative Congress (three-and-a-half millions to three-and-a-quarter millions). By this time there was a fuel crisis and a growing deficit on the balance of payments—but these did not deflect the Labour Government from its chosen path.

In the course of 1947, after great mass struggles in India against British police and troops, culminating in a mutiny of the Indian Navy, the Government reluctantly agreed to renounce its rule in that vast country—only however by adopting the classical method of 'divide and rule': breaking the country up into India and Pakistan, and ensuring that the new states would continue to protect British investments against their own people.

Now, confident of British support, United States capitalism took a further step. On March 12, 1947, President Truman's message to Congress laid down America's claim to dominate the political and economic life of the world, intervening militarily or otherwise where it chose, irrespective of its international pledges. This provoked a six-million vote condemnation at the Co-operative Congress—but none from the Labour Government. Arrogant appetites, once aroused, proceeded to action: in May 1947 the Communists were thrown out of the French Government, with the help of a £62.5 million American loan, and out of the Italian Government, by the promise of one. The same month, American Under-Secretary of State Acheson proclaimed his government's aim of building up anew 'the two great workshops of Europe and Asia—Germany and Japan'. And on June 5 came the counterpart from US Secretary of State Marshall—his plan for 'restoring' the economy of European states, on lines to be approved by the US and supervised by American

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missions in all countries accepting the scheme. Bevin made a pretence of being surprised and delighted by the proposal: in reality, it had been worked out in detail by State Department and British Embassy officials in Washington (as the *Times* revealed).

It was a natural conclusion that, that same month, the Labour Government turned down an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement which would have solved, at low cost, its grain difficulties: and, on July 15, made sterling convertible into dollars, pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of maintaining its 'status' as a world currency. The immediate consequence was a rapid melting away of the balance of the American loan, a heavy fall in shares and securities without precedent since the Dunkirk defeat of 1940, and a sharp programme of cuts in living standards and resources for re-equipment of industry, while forcing up exports to 60 per cent above the 1938 level by restricting home consumption (the 'Cripps Plan' of September and October, from the name of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, made famous in pre-war days by his 'socialist' speeches).

Under the impact of these events, and of the constant protests in Labour ranks, what the *New York Times* called 'the first dividend on the Marshall Plan' appeared. At municipal elections in November 1947, there were signs of a marked Tory revival: while Labour put on 500,000 votes, the Tories put on 1,500,000.

However, this had no moderating effect on the Labour Party leadership. In December it joined with the Americans in breaking off discussions in Moscow about policy in Germany: in reality, a new currency for West Germany—not yet constituted a separate state—had already been printed. That month, too, Labour Party Secretary Morgan Phillips circularised the trade unions inviting them to expel Communists from official posts. In February 1948, when the Czechoslovak working class drove sabotaging capitalist Ministers out of their government, the Labour Government was foremost in the howl of fury which arose in the capitalist countries, and in promoting the Western military pact signed in Brussels on March 17, 1948, openly and unashamedly as an attempt to terrify the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. By May, as the Notes of the Month pointed out, talk of war on the USSR and discussion by US officials of how best to bomb its cities were even more open—a sign, as the Notes said, not of strength but of weakness, frustration and desperation.

In June, amidst even louder howling and sabre-rattling, the provocation rose to a new height, by the launching of the new currency in West Germany—thereby in effect setting it up as a new

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state, though the formal step was to come later—and trying to disorganise the economy of East Germany by introducing the separate currency into West Berlin, in the heart of the Soviet zone. Soviet protective counter-measures were denounced as 'blockade', public talk of sending in American and British tanks from the West began, and an 'airlift' was started—entirely fatuous, since the USSR established depots of foodstuffs available to West Berliners in its zone. This provocative farce was kept up for months, although (as Secretary of State Dulles told overseas journalists on January 10, 1949) a settlement could easily have been made, and indeed was agreed by Western representatives, first in Moscow (August 30, 1948) then in Geneva (October 24)—only to be repudiated by their own governments. Finally, in October, the 'Brussels Powers' announced their intention of setting up Nato, an anti-Soviet war alliance, soon to include West Germany, and in utter and flagrant breach of the United Nations Charter. Thereby the division of Germany was ensured—and it has already lasted 23 years.

Meanwhile, a wage freeze had been accepted by the conference of trade union executives (March 1948), Labour MPs had been expelled for supporting the Italian socialists' united front with the Communists (May), the Emergency Powers Act had been invoked against dockers on strike (June), and the General Council had taken the first overt steps at the Margate TUC to disrupt the World Federation of Trade Unions set up when the war ended (September). 1949 saw a still faster descent of right-wing Labour down the slope—a 'Four Year Plan', exposed in a striking article by J. R. Campbell as consisting only of 'assumptions and forecasts', and based in reality on the continuation of colonial exploitation (February and April); a triumphant report to the US Senate, by the Chief Administrator of Marshall Aid in the United Kingdom, that British social services expenditure, chiefly on health, education and housing—which stood at 26.2 per cent of the budget in 1946—had already been cut down to 18.2 per cent, and by 1952 would be 16.8 per cent (article by D. N. Pritt QC in May); municipal elections, in which Tory and Labour programmes were practically indistinguishable, saw a further swing to the Tories (May); while miners were banning overtime, and railwaymen working to rule, the Labour Government again used the Emergency Powers Act against dockers (July); sterling was devalued 30 per cent (September 18), and bread prices went up 22 per cent; Attlee announced a new programme for lowering living standards, by a 10 per cent reduction of real wages, price

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rises, cuts in education and housing expenditure, and charges for prescriptions (December).

At a new conference of trade union executives (January 1950) the Government policy of wage freeze secured a majority of less than 700,000, instead of the five-and-a-half million majority it had had at the TUC in September 1949.

At every stage of this evolution of Labour Government policy, to the accompaniment of rejoicing in the US and growing discontent in the ranks of the working class (and others who had voted Labour in 1945), *Labour Monthly* was constantly in the field—printing facts hidden by most of the press, analysing their meaning, warning of the inevitable outcome of Labour Government action in economic crisis at home, subservience to the US and growing menace of war. Nor should it be supposed that the journal, while constantly drawing on specialist knowledge and opinion to throw light on these subjects, had no thought for many other matters of interest. During these first five years of the post-war period, there may be mentioned such topics and writers as 'World Famine' (F. Le Gros Clarke), 'Nuremberg' (Ivor Montagu), 'Science and the Welfare of Mankind' (Dr Sam Lilley), 'Elections in Europe' (William Rust), 'The Situation in France' (Dr Edgar Longuet, grandson of Karl Marx), 'Kashmir' (Sheikh Abdulla), 'Trusteeship and the Colonial Question' (Leonard Barnes), 'Canada' (Tim Buck), 'Nigeria' (Barbara Ruhemann), 'The Pope and English Politics' (Rev Stanley Evans), 'The Sovereignty of the People, January 4, 1649' (A. L. Merson)—with a number of articles on the economic and social achievements of the USSR, and unpublished letters of Lenin, Plekhanov and Stalin.

If, however, this survey has concentrated on the five years after the end of the war, it is because in that period were formed and fixed the main lines of the whole subsequent period up to 1971. The stubborn faith of the mass of the organised British working class that the Tories are their enemies and must be resisted; the skilful use of this faith at critical moments by right-wing (reformist) Labour Party and trade union leaders, while themselves determined in their service to capitalism, including British colonialism and British investments overseas; their rapid rejection of wartime agreements with the Soviet Union, and drift, more or less pronounced according to circumstances, into permanent hostility to it, especially when they were in office; correspondingly, their almost immediate slide into dependence on United States policy, accompanied from time to time with the most abject and repellent bootlicking; the constant attempt to maintain the financial and military power of the British

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Empire of pre-1939 days, without either the material or moral wherewithal—with the consequence of a running fever of crisis, convulsive emergency measures at the expense of the working class, slight revival followed by an unexpected downward plunge again. Such has been the history of Labour Governments since the war—1945-50, 1950-51, 1964-66, 1966-70.

If they managed, after the disappointments of the first six years, to return with majorities again in 1964 for another six years, it was only because the Tory Governments in essence pursued the same policies, and after a return to office in 1951, 1955 and 1959, gradually exhausted their welcome for the same reasons. And while Labour retained throughout a solid bloc—at least 12 million votes—with additions greater or smaller according to the degree of abstention which disgust at, or indifference to, their policy produced among the scattered 'marginal' voters, the same picture in essence on the Tory side bears witness to one outstanding fact—that right-wing Labour policy has proved incapable of making any decisive inroads into the reserve of unorganised, politically ignorant and gullible people whom the capitalist system produces, and who constitute the reserve into which the Tories still can dip. The following table of votes cast (in millions) for the largest parties tells the inescapable story:

	Labour	*Tory*	*Liberal*	*Electorate*
1945	12.1	10.0	2.2	33.0
1950	13.3	12.5	2.6	34.5
1951	13.9	13.7	0.7	34.6
1955	12.4	13.3	0.7	34.9
1959	12.2	13.8	1.7	35.4
1964	12.2	12.0	3.1	35.9
1966	13.1	11.4	2.3	36.0
1970*	12.1	13.1	2.1	39.4

* In this election, young people of 18 to 20 had the vote for the first time.

It should be added that the Communist Party, in most difficult circumstances created by the parliamentary system, fought in all these elections on a programme of socialist measures to meet current problems, as well as with its broader perspective of working class rule.

Thus twenty-five years' experience and resolute Marxist analysis confirm the picture which *Labour Monthly* has constantly drawn for its readers. Britain is still a country ruled by state monopoly capitalism in mid-1971, with all the consequences of that fact. The replacement in certain industries of particular capitalist groups by the capitalist class as a whole has not altered the reality. Twenty-five years of effort have only demonstrated still more clearly the

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failure of right-wing Labour—that is, socialist opportunism—to advance the working class towards emancipation. The self-defeating policies of successive majority Labour Governments have not advanced the cause of socialism in the capitalist world as it stood in 1945: on the contrary, they unleashed and aided the biggest imperialist aggressor in history—United States monopoly capitalism—to begin bloody aggression in Korea, in Vietnam, in Cambodia and Laos, and to prevent the German people from cutting out the roots of militarism and fascism in their country. And if the majority of the peoples ruled by colonialist methods in the old British Empire have regained political freedom and begun the long and painful struggle to climb out of economic and social misery, it is not because of the benevolence of Labour and Tory Governments but in spite of them—as the present struggle in Northern Ireland brutally reveals.

So also there is a growing leftward movement among the mass of the British people—for instance, the nationwide revolt against British support of American aggression—and, within organised labour, as shown by the advance of Communist and left-wing influence in the trade unions. But this is in spite of the Labour Party's right-wing leadership, not because of it. There is a swelling movement of protest in the United States against the war in South-East Asia and against anti-Negro practices at home; but British Labour Governments bear no responsibility for it, rather the reverse.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at its 24th Congress in April, was able to record gigantic successes—economic and social, political and moral—for real socialism, such as the old pioneers of the British movement dreamed about and such as might have seemed Utopian in 1921, when *Labour Monthly* began, and seemed an infinite distance away in 1945, when the USSR emerged from the Nazi war with its enormous wounds still fresh. The other countries which entered on the socialist path in 1944-45 also, despite many difficulties, have vast achievements. But opportunist Labourism can claim no credit for this: on the contrary, both in office and in opposition, its leaders did their best to put spokes in the wheel (even when the USSR has fought for disarmament, nuclear and conventional) and only the working class rank-and-file constantly display their solidarity and sympathy with the socialist countries.

To the struggle against Tory and Labour imperialism, Tory and right-wing Labour caretaking for British capitalism, opportunism in the British working class movement, *Labour Monthly* has made its contribution in these twenty-five years—and will continue to make it.

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BOOKS

Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary
Giuseppe Fiore
NLB, 304 pp., £2.75
(*This review, by a distinguished Italian historian and author of a history of the Italian Communist Party, is abreviated from a fuller review which appeared, on the occasion of the original Italian publication of the book, in* Rinascita, No. 17, *1966.*)

A MORE FITTING TITLE to this fine *Life of Antonio Gramsci* by Giuseppe Fiore would have been 'Gramsci, the Sardinian'. This is not to say that we are dealing with anything other than a conventional biography, human and political, which takes the reader along the whole course of the life of its subject. Fiore gives us the first life of Gramsci directed to the average reader, in a simple and attractive style. The author (who is also a novelist) here shows himself, in the fashioning of his biographical narrative, in the taste for anecdote, as well as in the expeditious and self-possessed manner in which he simplifies, and at times ignores, complex problems, an able jounalist. That a non-communist, in great part a stranger to the working class movement, should have applied himself to this work and made a good job of it, is a lesson, as well as another instance of how much the interest in Gramsci has become a commonplace in modern Italian culture.

The appeal of the book rests to some extent on the fact that it is written in part by Gramsci himself. The biographer, with the patience of the researcher and the scent of the journalist, has exploited in full the mine of the letters of Gramsci and on his own part has utilised other letters in the possession of relatives and friends of his subject.

Gramsci emerges as a man remarkable for his capacity for struggle and organisation as well as for his weakness in his not infrequent intimate discouragements, but hard as that phalanx of steel which his party became, tempered in the tempest, as he described it. When it was not made to fructify by a lucid will for action there was a certain aridity about him but when it came to heeding, understanding and animating the proletariat which trusted him implicitly, he was unrivalled; a man whose life was furrowed with pain and sorrow as much in infancy as in his manhood, much of which was spent in prison; at times frightfully lonely, yet capable of loving intensely, who faced the daily sacrifice of his life without respite, disputing it with the executioner with the persistence of the born fighter, overcoming both incomprehension and hostility. He had the pitiless candour to write to his mother on the eve of his sentencing to twenty years of imprisonment that 'at bottom I myself have in a way asked for a sentence of imprisonment because I never wanted to change my opinions for which I am ready to give my life, let alone imprisonment!' and added 'sometimes sons must cause great sorrows to their mothers if they are to preserve their honour and their dignity as men.'

The first eight chapters of Fiore's book abound in discoveries as a result of his local researches. Of particular interest is the one that Gramsci constructed one or two aids to assist him in the gymnastic exercises he performed to correct certain physical disabilities which struck him when he was four years old; and another that when he was at the

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high school of Santalussurgiu he sold the provisions given him by his family for money with which to buy newspapers and books; then there is that of the letter he sent to his father from Cagliari in which he wrote 'I didn't go to school today because I had to sole my boots. . . .' The revolutionary was developing in the young rebel. Fiore's documentation of Gramsci's first approach to the idea of socialism is also of great interest.

The rest of the book is not so successful, for the reason that, with the widening of the horizons and the intensification of historical problems to the point not only of embracing the great Italian crisis of 1919-26 but the dynamic of the whole international communist movement, the author's scant familiarity with themes so complex begins to make itself felt more heavily.

What sort of Gramsci emerges from the central part of the book? The Gramsci who introduces a new voice into the movement, the anti-sectarian Gramsci? the Gramsci watching for the hegemonic moment? the Gramsci who progressively counterposes himself with growing efficacy to Bordigan extremism and applies himself to constructing a mass movement as an effective weapon in the unitary anti-fascist class war? All aspects, which it will certainly not displease us to see praised, are presented. But the process of distinction is simplified to a degree which risks causing their realisation, through the day to day struggle, the contradictions, the dramas, zigzags, errors, which Gramsci lived and shared and for this very reason afterwards critically identified, to be lost sight of. To be more explicit, by comprehensibly stressing the 'democratic' nature of the Gramscian orientation (which, and not by chance, is the *political operation* conducted by a certain revisionism of the 'left', wholly intent on presenting us with a Gramsci of convenience, a little idealist, almost a bourgeois 'democraticule', in addition to a sort of bailiff executant of Comintern directives) many of his essential traits are lost.

PAOLO SPRIANO

One Man in His Time
Alick West
Allen & Unwin, 194 pp., £2.50

ALICK WEST has written some of the most perceptive literary criticism of our time. His essay in autobiography has a more than personal relevance, highly subjective though it is, since it charts a course which many individuals followed as they became aware of the threatening crisis that built up after the delusive peace of 1918.

The author was on vacation in Germany in August 1914, and was trapped there by the declaration of war. For four years he was detained in the camp for enemy nations at Ruhleben, an ordeal for which not a few would have been willing to exchange the more brutal experiences of actual warfare. The irksomeness of confinement found relief in intensive study and reading which stimulated a naturally philosophic intelligence.

The armistice of 1918 meant return to the relative freedom of a well-to-do middle class environment, whose associations and social values were supposedly held in common. But the resumption of parental domination provoked a reaction and the belated experience of university confirmed Alick West's premonition that the conventional careers held out to him would prove unacceptable. The twenties were a time of great intellectual excitement, philosophies competing for allegiance abounded and old

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frontiers in the arts were dissolving. By means of congenial work in tutoring and lecturing, West was able to subsist in a richly cultivated environment, in which it seemed that final decisions might be deferred indefinitely. But by the end of the decade the underlying social malaise had erupted. The developing economic depression and rise of German fascism were alarmingly evident. His work in Switzerland and German friendships made him particularly aware of this. About the same time the longest of his love relationships came to a tragic conclusion. This (though the change was inevitable) led to a greater involvement with the political drama and to contact with the Communist resistance to Hitlerism.

The study of *Capital* laid the foundations for an intellectual re-orientation, and the success of the first Soviet five-year plan appeared to be an irrefutable assurance of the superiority of socialist co-operation to competitive capitalism. After the Reichstag fire, Nazi pressure mounted against neighbouring states, such as Switzerland, where sympathisers might be giving refuge to anti-Nazis, as did Alick West and his wife. A police enquiry at their lodgings intimated that it would be wise to return to Britain.

That was early in 1935, and comes on page 165 of the book. The remaining 30 pages condense a period of almost as many years. It begins with membership of the Communist Party and wholly satisfying absorption in the cycle of branch activities and in the initiation of Marxist courses in the cultural field which he tutored. The war years seem to have brought an erosion of confidence in the optimistic perspective of social change. A tension builds up which is discharged in a truly terrifying moment, when the writer finds himself inexplicably precipitated down a flight of stone stairs, receiving severe injuries.

This could be an alarm signal, indicating that a primary psychological pattern had reasserted itself over the intellectual simplification which had obscured a fundamental reservation. There is a recurring theme in other crises in the narrative: 'I wanted to, but didn't.' It is the underlying awareness of this theme which gives the main portion of this book its delicate, almost musical, evocative quality. It would seem to have been an error in judgement to attempt to clarify the dilemma by transposing this essential ambiguity into political terms, as happens in the last score or so of pages, where issues are raised which are just not susceptible to that sort of treatment.

EDGELL RICKWARD

May Day Greetings

to all our readers and many friends

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Labour Radical

Len De Caux

Beacon Press, 558 pp., available on order from Collet's

THE TITLE *Labour Radical—From the Wobblies to CIO*, by Len De Caux describes the author's lifework. The major part of the book deals with the origin, growth and development of the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) in the US. In contrast to most of the 'official' histories, it includes the role and contributions of the left and the Communists, the precarious but key alliance of the left with the centre led by John L. Lewis and later Phil Murray, of the CIO's relations with the Roosevelt administration, the impact of the cold war and the subsequent purging of the 'reds', expelling of unions with two million members and the capitulation of the CIO to the anti-labour Taft-Hartley Act.

Covering part of the same period and many of the same events as I have described in my own book, it deals with them from the view of the 'insider' in top CIO circles, where De Caux was national publicity director and editor under both Lewis and Murray.

He gives interesting and intriguing word pictures of most of the CIO leaders. Especially valuable is his description of the thinking and actions of Lewis, Murray and Sidney Hillman, the three key figures in top CIO leadership, who had each in their youth worked in pit or clothing sweatshop.

All were non-Communists and at times in their history, fiercely anti-Communist; all were typical trade union leaders claiming vociferously to have 'no philosophy' but all firm believers in capitalism; Murray, as distinct from Lewis and Hillman, had close ties with the Catholic hierarchy; but all, under specific circumstances, not only challenged monopoly capitalism by organising a new militant trade union movement of five million members in basic industry, but entered openly into alliance with the left and the Communists to achieve it.

De Caux, as a result of intimacy with all the top CIO leaders, singles out Lewis as the most capable and straight-forward and after all these years is still mesmerised by him—to the point of failure to be equally critical of him as he correctly is of Murray, Hillman and, later, Reuther.

While defending the role of the left and the Communists in the CIO, de Caux's early 'coming to' the working class without being 'of the working class', tends on occasion to find expression in underestimating the historical role of the CIO and in elements of cynicism regarding the tactical manoeuvres necessary to maintain the left-centre alliance in the CIO.

The book is not only a valuable contribution to an appreciation of the historical role of the CIO in American labour history, but those chapters dealing with the poisonous consequences of anti-Communism, and those dealing with the Taft-Hartley Act, failure to fight it effectively and, above all, rushing to comply with it, all have basic lessons for the British trade union movement today.

My friend De Caux has not only written an extremely human story, but one that will aid future historians of the American labour movement. He concludes with a chapter on the sixties which he says were a 'resurrection decade for any old left whose eyes could still see'. Warning the youth of the sixties not to minimise the role of the working class and especially the CIO unions, he says the 'CIO drew upon the dreams' of Debs, the IWW and Wm. Z. Foster, and while 'the CIO left might seem to have failed' in 'longer perspective

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it succeeded phenomenally in exerting leadership within a labour movement carefully barred to radical influence.'

However much 'impatient radicals' feel 'frustrated by the stolidity of organised workers', De Caux correctly emphasised the continuity of the class struggle and how decisive it is for progress that 'labour must be induced, from within or without, to move if any substantial social progress is to be achieved.'

JOHN WILLIAMSON

British Foreign Policy During World War II

V. Trukhanovsky
Progress Publishers (Central Books), 494 pp., £1.25

READERS OF THIS JOURNAL during the war of 1939-45 will doubtless have retained their impression that *Labour Monthly* stood alone among such reviews in never yielding for a moment to the bluff, lies or hypocritical assurances coming from Downing Street about relations with the Soviet Union—the emphasis which the Government laid on one or other of these forms of brain-stuffing varied according to circumstances. Similarly it stood alone among the reviews in emphasising that victory over fascism depended above all on the Soviet war effort, and that on friendship between the British people and the Soviet Union would depend the whole future of international relations after the war.

In this volume, packed with facts and references and produced at (for nowadays) a very reasonable price, one of the leading Soviet historians in the field of international politics who is editor-in-chief of *Problems of History*, the main historical journal of the USSR, brings together the whole story with great lucidity. He draws not only on what was available in wartime or the years immediately following 1945, of course, but on a vast variety of memoirs and diaries, collections of documents, public debates and particular historical studies which have become available since those days, up to 1965, when the Russian edition was first published. As such, it can be confidently recommended to anyone wishing to understand the foreign policy of British imperialism—and bemused by the official apologies for that policy which continue to appear.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

The World of the Ranters

A. L. Morton
Lawrence & Wishart, 224 pp., £2.75

A. L. MORTON has used what he calls his 'worming around' the British Museum's Thomason Collection to excellent effect in this group of essays. The Collection comprises pamphlets, books, newspapers and manuscripts gathered by a London bookseller between 1640 and 1661, and Morton's detailed work in this material has enabled him to highlight various aspects of this revolutionary period in English history.

Several essays provide interesting documentation on writers and preachers active in the religious ferment of the time. Some are obscure, while others, like Saltmarsh and Walwyn, played a national role in the religious and political struggles during and after the Civil War. It is also valuable to have an examination of the Ranter movement, which has often been lumped together with other picturesque and superficially curious sects and accorded little importance. Morton, as well as giving a detailed exposition of their ideas, performs a great service by placing them in the

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political context of the late 1640s, showing how their mystical millenarianism became influential in late 1649, after the decisive removal of the Levellers from significant political or military activity. He calls Ranterism the ideology of defeat: the Ranters' belief in a divine intervention to smash the existing social order became popular only after the human attempt by the Levellers to shift the revolution drastically leftwards had failed.

Apart from this more detailed work, Morton also contributes to general discussion of the period. He stresses the important political implications of the religious controversies, and it is useful to be reminded of the socially subversive consequences of a belief in God's grace freely available to all, as opposed to the élitist Calvinist conception that it is only available to a predetermined few, the 'elect'. The Ranter belief that God dwelt equally in every man and in every object is shown to be even more subversive. *The World of the Ranters* conveys vividly the excitingly modern flavour of some of the ideas which arose at this time, in the revolutionary climate engendered by the struggle against traditional authority. The demands for reversion of sovereignty to the people as the origin of all just power, the affirmation of equality of poor and rich in the Putney Debates, and the constant appeal to natural law rather than precedent, all mark as Morton says the emergence of a democratic political theory through the Leveller movement and its allies like the Ranters. He produces some interesting points in reply to C. B. Macpherson's argument about the limited nature of the franchise proposed by the Levellers, and this controversy raises further issues on which it would be valuable to have Morton's views in more detail. It is very tempting, because of the radical and egalitarian flavour of Leveller writing, to see their movement, in modern class terms, as a movement of the proletariat. It would be interesting, given the very different stage of historical development at which they appeared, to have a more concrete idea of what class forces supported them, and to explore what evidence is available on this topic.

R. COHEN

English Party Politics,
Vol. I 1660-1906 and Vol. II 1906-1970
edited by Alan Beattie
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 220 pp., £2.50 (paperback £1.25) and 638 pp., £4.20 (paperback £1.50)

THE EDITOR, who is Lecturer in Political Science at the London School of Economics, presents in these two volumes a selection of contemporary sources—extracts from parliamentary debates, articles, diaries, letters, etc.—relating to the evolution of political parties in England. The material is divided into six periods, 1660-1760, 1760-1832, 1832-67, 1867-1906, 1906-31 and 1931-70, each of them being preceded with an introduction by the editor.

Any such selection of documents naturally reflects the outlook of the editor. In his general introduction to the first volume Professor Beattie rejects all 'crude forms of Marxism' which regard political parties as mere manifestations of class or self-interest, but does not deign to discuss a serious Marxist approach to parties (such as that adopted by Marx himself, for example). In Professor Beattie's view, it is not social classes or principles which matter, so much as the way in which political parties have developed in subordination to the gradually evolving rules of the constitution.

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Parties are important but the British Constitution is primary, and he comes close to regarding it as having some kind of essence which has continued to exist in spite of the tremendous changes since 1660.

As a result of this rather old-fashioned and Conservative approach, the selection is devoted mainly to the way in which parties have functioned in parliament and what the leaders of these parties and their academic followers have said about them. Programmes and policies are almost wholly excluded, as well as the views of radicals and socialists. There is, for example, a great deal of Burke, only a page of Tom Paine and nothing at all of Wilkes or of Cobbett. Leaders of the Labour Party, such as Macdonald, Snowden and Henderson, receive generous treatment, but there are only snippets of Keir Hardie or Aneurin Bevan. Marxist views, from Hyndman and William Morris onwards, are excluded. Only Tawney is quoted on the question of 'class', and there is nothing at all from Laski. A great deal of space is given in the second volume to the constitution of the Labour Party, but there is nothing on its policy and clause four is omitted.

It is undeniable that, given the editor's point of view, many of the documents he has collected are of great interest, and some are fascinating (though the value of the selection is seriously diminished by the absence of an index). To give only one example, a remark by Lord Northbrook in 1840: 'Whiggery means the existence of a body of men connected with high rank and property . . . who in bad times keep alive the sacred flame of freedom, and when the people are roused stand between the constitution and revolution and go with the people, but not to extremities . . .'

JAMES HARVEY

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READERS will be wanting to know how far the fund figure below represents a recovery in our fortunes after our tiny total of last month. Well, the extra effort put into fund raising has already brought us within reach of the 'healthy' mark. The double donations to make up for the February and March losses (and some special boosters in addition) are the cause of the good-looking total below, and more are still coming in to complete the task of putting the fund back in business.

Our Editorial Board's Emergency Appeal is, of course, still open, and we are very glad to see that readers have appreciated the need to maintain our regular fund while responding to that urgent call for emergency donations.

News from friends who have taken copies of *LM* for sale at various meetings and demonstrations in the past few weeks shows how a particular article can be the selling point on which to reach new readers. The February number, with articles on students (by •David Wynn) and youth (Tony McNally), sold 18 extra copies at the Manchester Youth Conference. Audrey Wise's article on 'Women's Liberation' sold four extra of the March issue at a Marx Memorial Library meeting in London (where she was one of the speakers), and four at a meeting of women supporters of the African National Congress; another seven were sold to Connolly Association supporters on the basis of Sean Redmond's article on 'A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland'. The April issue was on sale at the National Union of Students Conference in Lancaster: the article of interest was by Elaine Woolston on 'Overseas Students', and twelve were sold.

The crowds at demonstrations against the Tory Government's anti-trade union bill are always good for special sales—the only restriction being in the number of volunteers we can get to take the sale-or-return copies. We could do with a few more helpers of the kind who like to have a positive job to do while supporting these demonstrations: a phone call to our office (01-346 5135) is all that is needed to make the arrangements. Good luck to all helpers.

Nicola Seyd

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Because They're Black, Derek Humphry and Gus John. Penguin, 204 pp., 30p.

Aid as Imperialism, Teresa Hayter. Penguin, 222 pp., 30p.

The Juggernauts, Graham Bannock. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 364 pp., £3.25.

Social Theory and Social Policy, Robert Pinker. Heinemann, 226 pp., £2.

Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes, selected and annotated by Edgell Rickward. Adams & Dart, 320 pp., £2.50.

Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson, introduced by Jean Genet. Jonathan Cape, 290 pp., £2.50, Penguin, 290 pp., 35p.

The Little Red School Book, Soren Hansen and Jesper Jensen. Stage 1, 208 pp., 30p.

The Impact of Labour 1920-1924, Maurice Cowling. Cambridge University Press, 570 pp., £5.40.

Political Quarterly in the Thirties, edited by W. A. Robson. Allen Lane, 250 pp., £3.15.

Soviet Marxism, Herbert Marcuse. Penguin, 222 pp., 30p.

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